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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 08251

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL IR PK SU
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN SEES SIGNS OF UPTURN IN IRAN-SOVIET TIES

¶1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

¶2. SUMMARY: FOREIGN SECRETARY NAIK SUMMARIZED HIS AMBASSADOR'S APPRAISAL OF UPTURN IN IRAN-SOVIET TIES. THE AMBASSADOR ASSERTS IRANIAN RATIONALE IS BASICALLY PRAGMATIC AND ASSERTS TREND WILL CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

¶3. RESPONDING TO MY EARLIER REQUEST FOR GOP THINKING ON THE MEANING OF THE APRIL 5 VISIT TO MOSCOW OF IRANIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER HOSSEIN ARDEBILI, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY APRIL 19 SUMMARIZED FOR POLCOUNSELOR AND ME A CABLE JUST RECEIVED. WE SHOULD PROTECT THE SOURCE COMPLETELY.

THE SIGNS OF AN UPTURN

¶4. EARLY IN 1984, THE GOI HAD INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO TRY THE TUDEH PARTY LEADERS, SENT LOW LEVEL OFFICIALS TO THE SOVIET REVOLUTIONARY DAY CELEBRATIONS, AND LIMITED SOVIET DIPLOMATS' CONTACTS.

¶5. THE SOVIET PATIENCE NOW SEEMS TO BE BEARING FRUIT
AS:

-- THE IRANIANS POSTPONED THE TUDEH TRIALS (IN NOVEMBER);
-- RAFSANJANI ATTENDED AND SPOKE PROFUSELY AT THE 10-DAY DAWN(SIC) CELEBRATION; AND

-- THE IRANIAN PRESS HAS STARTED TO CAST THE SOVIETS IN A MORE FAVORABLE LIGHT. MOST RECENTLY A PROMINENT COLUMNIST QUESTIONED THE GOVERNMENT'S RATIONALE FOR NOT HAVING CONSULTED WITH THE SOVIETS DURING RECENT DIPLOMATIC DEMARCHE MADE WHEN THE WAR INTENSIFIED (WHY NOT INCLUDE THE NUMBER ONE SUPERPOWER--OUR STRONG NEIGHBOR?).

- WHAT IRAN WANTS

¶6. IN CONTEXT OF AN INCREASINGLY COSTLY WAR, THE AMBASSADOR CONCLUDES IRAN SEEKS:

-- TO EASE ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, E.G., WITH POSSIBILITY OF GAS SALES TO THE SOVIETS;

-- SECURE LINES OF COMMUNICATION--THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME UNCERTAINTY OVER THE TURKISH LOC; AND

-- ESTABLISH ALTERNATIVE AIR ROUTES--THE IRAQI THREAT HAS CUT MOST OF IRAN AIR'S WESTWARD SERVICE, AND THE SOVIETS HAVE OFFERED A NEW ROUTE TO FRANKFURT VIA MOSCOW.

¶7. THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR SEES A NUMBER OF TANGIBLE INDICATORS ALREADY REFLECTING BENEFITS OF INCREASED ECONOMIC COOPERATION:

-- THE SOVIETS ARE HELPING BUILD POWER GENERATORS, AND SEEKING TO EXPAND THIS AREA OF COOPERATION.

-- TWO-WAY TRADE IN 1985 SHOULD EXCEED \$2 BILLION.

-- A JOINT MINISTERIAL MEETING WILL BE HELD IN MAY-JUNE, AND EXPERTS WILL MEET IN MOSCOW IN MAY TO LOOK AT OTHER STEPS FOR ENHANCING ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

- ARDEBILI VISIT

¶8. PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR SURMISES THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE REITERATED OPPOSITION TO THE WAR'S CONTINUATION. HE BELIEVES THE IRANIAN SIDE LIKELY ONLY LISTENED. THE IRANIANS WOULD HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT SOVIET ARMS SUPPLIES TO IRAQ--WHETHER SOVIETS TAKE NOTE WILL PROBABLY DEPEND ON SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF IRAN'S POST-WAR INTENTIONS. THE SOVIETS WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO SEE IRAN TOO STRONG.

¶9. THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR SEES THESE CURRENT MOVES AS A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE. IRAN FEELS INCREASINGLY ISOLATED. ITS REMAINING ARAB SUPPORTERS, E.G., SYRIA AND LIBYA, ARE SOVIET FRIENDS. AMBASSADOR ASSERTS MANY IRANIANS WOULD PREFER BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., BUT THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY TIE POWERFUL NEIGHBOR WHICH CAN DO IMMEDIATE GOOD OR EVIL.

¶10. NAIK, EXTENDING THE POINT MADE ABOUT THE U.S., NOTED THAT THE IRANIAN DELEGATION AT THE RECENT ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO) COMMITTEE MEETINGS HAD EXPANDED THE CONSENSUS TO GET TECHNICAL COOPERATION (IF NECESSARY) FROM "WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES." PAKISTAN AND TURKEY

¶11. COMMENT: NO DOUBT THE GOP IS WATCHING THESE DEVELOPMENTS WITH CONSIDERABLE CONCERN. THEY UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN ABOUT IRANIAN STATE TERRORISM BUT WOULD WELCOME U.S. MOVES TO EASE IRAN'S ATTITUDE.

HINTON